

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1081
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DEPARTMENT PASS LABOR

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, NL

SUBJECT: LARGEST DUTCH TRADE UNION (NVV) TO BOYCOTT
LABOR FOUNDATION AND SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL

REF: THE HAGUE 1630

1. SUMMARY: ACTING PRESIDENT OF DUTCH FEDERATION OF
TRADE UNIONS WALKED OUT OF EMERGENCY SESSION OF LABOR
FOUNDATION EVENING APRIL 10. HE ANNOUNCED NVV WOULD
ALSO REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN FUTURE MEETINGS OF SOCIAL
ECONOMIC COUNCIL. CAUSE OF WALKOUT WAS CENTRAL EMPLOYERS'
ORGANIZATION'S REFUSAL CEASE " INTERFERING" IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL UNIONS AND EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS.
CATHOLIC TRADE UNION FEDERATION (NKV) AND PROTESTANT
TRADE UNION FEDERATION (CNV) DECLINED TO JOIN NVV IN
WALKOUT BUT CLAIM THIS WILL NOT HURT CAUSE TRADE UNION
UNITY. NVV'S DECISION, TAKEN AGAINST BACKGROUND CONTINU-
ING LABOR UNREST AND UNCERTAINTY ON WHO WILL FORM NEW
GOVT, IS LATEST EXAMPLE OF TURBULENCE WHICH THREATENING BE-
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COME HALLMARK OF DUTCH SOCIO- ECONOMIC SCENE.
END SUMMARY.

2. ADRI DE BOON, ACTING PRESIDENT OF NVV, LARGEST DUTCH TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION, LEFT EMERGENCY MEETING OF LABOR FOUNDATION (ORGANIZATION OF UNIONS AND EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS) EVENING APRIL 10 WHEN EMPLOYERS' REPRESENTATIVES REFUSED TO GIVE ASSURANCES THEY WOULD NO LONGER " INTERFERE" IN BARGAINING PROCESS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL TRADE UNIONS, E. G. INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS. DE BOON DECLARED NVV WOULD ALSO BOYCOTT MEETINGS OF SER (SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL- TRIPARTITE ORGANIZATION OF UNIONS, EMPLOYERS AND CROWN- APPOINTED EXPERTS). EMERGENCY LABOR FOUNDATION MEETING HAD BEEN CALLED AT INSTANCE CNV PRESIDENT LANSER.

3. DURING LABOR FOUNDATION SESSION EMPLOYERS' SPOKESMEN (KAKKENIST AND VAN BOVEN, CHAIRMEN RESPECTIVELY OF DUTCH EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION, VNO, AND CONFESSONAL EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION, NCW) DENIED NVV CHARGE THEY WERE INTERFERING IN NEGOTIATIONS AND THEREFORE REFUSED PROVIDE ASSURANCES THEY WOULD CEASE SUCH INTERFERENCE. EMPLOYERS' SAID, HOWEVER, THEY SHARE NVV'S VIEW CENTRAL ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT INFLUENCE BARGAINING AND WOULD BE WILLING TO SUBSCRIBE TO STATEMENT OF THIS SORT. DE BOON, WHO TERMED THIS ANSWER UNSATISFACTORY, CONTENDED CURRENT IMPASSE IN METAL INDUSTRY HAS BEEN CAUSED BY VNO AND NCW INTERFERENCE AND ESPECIALLY BY PERSONAL EFFORTS OF BAKKENIST AND VAN BOVEN. DE BOON, WHO CHARGED EMPLOYERS ARE ENGAGED IN EFFORT TO BANKRUPT INDUSTRIAL UNION, SAID NVV COULD NOT TOLERATE THIS SINCE THIS COULD ALSO MEAN RUIN OF NVV. VNO SPOKESMAN BAKKENIST DENIED EITHER HIS OWN OR THE CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATION WAS INTERFERING IN NEGOTIATIONS. BAKKENIST CLAIMED ONLY SOLUTION FOR CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IS FOR UNIONS TO WITHDRAW MAXIMUM PRICE COMPENSATION DEMAND (STEP TOWARD INCOMES POLICY). HE DECRIED UNIONS' REFUSAL TO TALK WITH EMPLOYERS UNTIL THIS DEMAND MET.

4. LANSER, PRESIDENT OF CNV, AND VAN HOUT, GENERAL
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SECRETARY OF NKV, OBVIOUSLY DISCOMFITED BY NVV'S

DECISION, SAID IT WILL RESULT IN UNWORKABLE SITUATION SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH OBTAINED WHEN NVV AND NKV BOYCOTTED SER TO PROTEST WAGE STOP. CNV AND NKV MEET IN EMERGENCY SESSION TODAY (APRIL 11) TO DISCUSS NVV DECISION. CONFESSIONAL UNION REPRESENTATIVES SAID THEY ARE DISAPPOINTED WITH EMPLOYERS' REACTION BUT ARE WILLING TO TAKE BAKKENIST AT HIS WORD. THEY SAID THEY WILL ADVISE THEIR OWN UNION NOT REPEAT NOT TO FOLLOW NVV EXAMPLE. INDUSTRIA WORKERS' UNION PRESIDENT ARIE GROENEVELT (WHOSE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS WUNION SCHEME FOR INCOME REDISTRIBUTION IS AT HEART OF CURRENT CONTROVERSY) COMMENTED THAT NVV DECISION IS CORRECT ONE. HE MAINTAINED EMPLOYERS ARE MAKING EFFORT TO WORSEN CURRENT SITUATION BUT TRUSTS INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS IN INDUSTRIES INVOLVED IN STRIKE WILL TAKE MORE REASONABLE LINE VIS- A- VIS UNION PROPOSALS.

5. COMMENT: NVV'S DECISION IS LATEST INDICATION OF UNREST ON TRADE UNION FRONT. AS LONG AS NVV ADHERES TO ITS DECISION, WORK OF LABOR FOUNDATION AND SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL EFFECTIVELY CEASES. CONFESSIONAL UNIONS' DECISION NOT TO JOIN NVV IN WALK-OUT IS YET ANOTHER SIGN THAT UNITY AMONG THREE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS (NOW SET TO MERGE IN SEPTEMBER OR MONTHS AFTER JANUARY TARGET DATE) IS QUESTIONABLE. WITH 50,000 WORKERS IN 51 COMPANIES ON STRIKE AS OF APRIL 10 AND MAJOR STRIKE LOOMING IN DAIRY INDUSTRY, LABOR SITUATION IN THE NETHERLANDS DECIDEDLY UNSETTLED.

6. NVV DECISION CAME SAME DAY AS QUEEN APPOINTED CO- INFORMATEURS, WHO IN FIRST INSTANCE WILL MOST LIKELY WORK TOWARD SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION BURGER'S FORMATION EFFORT, I. E. GOVT WITH DEN UYL AS PRIME MINSITER. LABOR UNREST IS FACTOR PROMOTING UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS OF LEFT WING GOVT SINCE UNIONS HAVE MADE CLEAR ON EVERY OCCASION POSSIBLE THEIR DISTASTE FOR ANY GOVT WHICH INCLUDES LIBERALS. EVEN IF LEFT WING GOVT COMES TO POWER, HOWEVER, (AS SUGGESTED REFTEL) IT TOO WOULD HAVE ITS HANDS FULL WITH POWERFUL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS PUSHING FOR BASIC CHANGES IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE NETHERLANDS.

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